

even scandalous. Our media won't ever report on this, but I am going to try again.

The Secretary of the Interior is from New Mexico. OK. That is interesting. Guess which State—my State can't get barely a lease. We beg. We make speeches. We fly dozens of people into DC to get leases on the Federal lands in my State to move forward. Guess which State has gotten, in the first 2 years of the Biden administration, more than half of all Federal permits to drill on Federal lands? Do you think it is Alaska? No. Is it Texas? My friend from Texas is here. It is not Texas. It is not North Dakota. It is not any of those places. Guess which it is. Oh, my goodness. It is New Mexico—New Mexico. Isn't that an interesting story for somebody? The Secretary of the Interior is from New Mexico. The senior Senator from New Mexico is from New Mexico, obviously, and they are getting all of the leases. They are getting all of the leases.

Here is the thing. New Mexico is on a tear in terms of producing oil. Now, look, I have nothing against that. The country needs it. The country needs it. But look at these numbers. These are millions of barrels. Red is New Mexico. Gray is Alaska. We are kind of steady. We need more oil. New Mexico is in red. Look at that. Holy cow. It is through the roof—through the roof. And guess what is coming with all of that production. Greenhouse gas emissions through the roof in New Mexico. Where is the reporting on that topic?

You know, sometimes the media likes to talk about “climate bombs” in the country. I don't really like the phrase. I think it is silly. But if there is a climate bomb from the production of oil in America, it is right there. It is right there.

Again, I think it is fine that this State is doing well. It is good for the country, and it is good for the workers in New Mexico. But what I don't like is the rank hypocrisy. The media is always focusing on Alaska, on our production. Yet look at this: There were 9,366 applications for permits to drill, which were approved during the first 2 years of the Biden administration, in New Mexico. Yes, that is right—over 9,000—while my State can barely get 1. And 52 percent of all permits to drill in the country are in New Mexico.

The Secretary is from New Mexico. Where is that story? Where is that story? The Secretary of the Interior has been shutting down Alaska energy production while approving massive drilling activity in her own State, and the media won't touch that story with a 10,000-foot pole.

New Mexico has increased production by 700,000 barrels a day since 2019. They are at 1.7 million barrels a day. My State is at about 500,000, and we are trying to increase. Where is that story?

You know, the senior Senator from New Mexico is always trying to shut down any oil development in Alaska. I have talked about it on the floor. I am

not going to go into it a lot here, but he has gone to extreme measures, like writing banks and insurance companies and saying: Don't invest in Alaska. But it is “drill, baby, drill” in New Mexico. No one writes that story, and I think it is hypocritical, too, because the greenhouse gas emissions in that State are going through the roof.

So there is a lot of hypocrisy going on. In my State, my constituents—the Native people, the working people—just want the most environmentally sensitive project in the world, which is the Willow Project, to keep our economy going and to help our country. That is all we want.

I think, given what the Secretary of the Interior is doing for her own State—like I said, “drill, baby, drill,” with a climate bomb in New Mexico—it is time to finalize the Willow Project according to the scientists and the final EIS that was granted by the Biden administration 2 weeks ago and not use political muscle and political power to kill a project in my State when this blue State is drilling like crazy and producing like crazy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in January, monthly border crossings dropped below 200,000 for the first time since last March. Last month, U.S. Customs and Border Protection logged more than 156,000 illegal border crossings. This was the busiest January in more than two decades. Yet, somehow, the Biden administration is trying to claim victory for this temporary dip in illegal border crossings. If you ask me, the President is popping the cork a little early.

For starters, these numbers are artificially reduced thanks to the administration's new parole program. Now, “parole” is not a commonly used word, but what the parole does in this context is it allows up to 30,000 people from specific countries per month into the United States. Basically, they are waved on through. If migrants enter the country on a legal basis, which is exactly what this program creates, they will never be tallied as part of the illegal migration statistics. So how better to make something illegal legal than to simply wave your magic wand and create a new category by which migrants are admitted to the United States?

In short, this new policy has allowed the administration to roll out the welcome mat for tens of thousands of migrants while pretending that the humanitarian and public safety crisis at the border is abating. It is not. It is not abating.

Second, January is a historically slow month for migration. During the previous administration, Customs and Border Protection logged an average of about 43,000 illegal border crossings each January. As a reminder, last month, we encountered 156,000—43,000

during the previous administration; this administration, 156,000 in January.

Now, as we head into spring, those numbers are sure to climb again. Warming temperatures and seasonal work always leads to increased migration, and I don't expect this year to be an exception. The numbers may have dropped temporarily last month, but there is no reason for the President to spike the football or to claim victory.

Every single day, thousands of migrants cross the United States-Mexico border. The overwhelming majority arrive here with only what they can carry on their backs. When they reach the United States, they need food, shelter, clothing, medical care, transportation, and the like.

Since President Biden took office, the pace of illegal border crossings has made this already-tough job of caring for migrants increasingly more challenging just by the sheer volume of humanity coming across the border. So law enforcement, nonprofits, and folks in my State who live and work on the border have begged the Biden administration to take action. It is not even fair to say that they were met with a shrug. Rather, they were just ignored.

In order to ease the burden on border communities in Texas, Governor Greg Abbott began transporting migrants to other States and cities last year. If the Biden administration is going to give them a piece of paper and say, “Show up for an immigration court hearing at some indefinite date in the future”—perhaps years in the future—then Governor Abbott's theory was that, rather than have them wait there in the border communities, give them a bus ticket and let them go to the place where they have told the U.S. Government they intended to relocate pending their court hearing.

But the moment the challenges spread from these small border towns in Texas to liberal enclaves in the Northeast, the outrage machine fired up big time. President Biden didn't care about the border crisis when it affected the Rio Grande Valley or Laredo or Del Rio or El Paso, but the moment it reached Manhattan and Martha's Vineyard or Chicago or Washington, DC, it was somehow a crisis.

And, of course, we know who the President blamed. He blamed Republicans. Forget the fact that nonprofits have a longstanding practice of using Federal funds to transport migrants all over the country to await their future court hearing. But once the State of Texas or the State of Arizona or the State of Florida began offering transportation to these same migrants, the President and our Democratic colleagues had an absolute meltdown.

Our colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, called the practice “cruel and inhumane.” The White House Press Secretary said it was “shameful” and “reckless.” Vice President KAMALA HARRIS went so far as to call this “the height of irresponsibility” and “a dereliction of duty.”

When it hurts my constituents, my border communities, the people I represent here in the Senate, they are simply ignored. But once that problem begins to show up on the doorstep of the Vice President or Mayor Bowser or Mayor Adams or the mayor of Chicago, you would think the roof was falling in.

I don't think Vice President HARRIS recognized the many layers of irony in the statement that somehow this was "a dereliction of duty" and "the height of irresponsibility." What it shows is simply how little she understands the nature of the problem, much less any way to try to fix it.

Now, it is not just the nonprofits and the Republican Governors that are transporting migrants. It is the Democratic mayor of New York City.

Eric Adams is the mayor of the largest city in the United States. New York City is home to roughly 8.5 million people, and its annual budget exceeds \$100 billion. That is higher than all but a handful of States. Once busloads of migrants began to arrive in New York City last year, Mayor Adams quickly realized what border mayors had been saying all along: that this is a big problem.

After welcoming a few thousand migrants, Mayor Adams said his city was near the breaking point. Again, this was the reaction when a few thousand migrants arrived into a major city with a \$100 billion annual budget.

Can you imagine what it has been like in small towns like Del Rio, TX, of 35,000 people, where they had 15,000 Haitians under a bridge in that small city and, frankly, without the resources to deal with them?

So, frankly, I am not all that sympathetic to Mayor Adams' quandary because of what my constituents have been living with for the entirety of the Biden administration. New York City has vast resources and a long list of folks willing to help, and still it is struggling to care for the migrants arriving on its doorstep.

Meanwhile, communities across Texas—small in comparison to New York—were absorbing thousands of migrants in a single day with only a fraction of the resources.

Over the last several months, the number of migrants arriving in New York City has grown dramatically. It has received more than 40,000 migrants, and the challenges have only grown. I am not surprised by that, but this is a taste of what we have been experiencing for years, thanks to the Biden administration's dereliction of duty.

Mayor Adams started doing what Republican Governors of Texas and the Democratic mayor of El Paso had already done. He offered these migrants free transportation elsewhere.

So they have come to New York City. Mayor Adams said this is terrible. And what does he do? He then offers the migrants a free bus ticket to go somewhere else.

New York City has purchased bus tickets for migrants headed in all di-

rections around the country. Migrants were offered a free ride, and many willingly accepted.

This is exactly what has happened in border States like Texas, but the reaction has been completely different. I haven't heard Vice President HARRIS, for example, call this "the height of irresponsibility" or "a dereliction of duty." Certainly, our Democratic colleagues haven't repeated their claims that this is somehow cruel and inhumane, no matter how erroneous they were in the first place.

When migrants receive free bus tickets from conservative States like Texas, it is framed as a human rights abuse. But when it happens in Manhattan, it is viewed as an act of charity or kindness. The hypocrisy is simply breathtaking.

To be clear, I don't fault Mayor Adams for helping migrants reach other parts of the country. I am sure he is trying to manage with this new phenomenon. But I would hope that he would recognize that this has been something we have been having to cope with as a result of the failure of the Federal Government to deal with this humanitarian and public safety crisis.

The influx of tens of thousands of migrants can certainly place a strain on local health systems and emergency response services. It could put a dent in a city's budget. It can overwhelm the nonprofits and hurt the vulnerable locals who already rely on those services. But that is exactly what we have been seeing in States like mine for years, but to no avail. It is unfair to expect any city or any State to carry the burden of this crisis because it is the Federal Government's responsibility.

We now learn that every community in America is now a border community. This morning, during a Finance Committee hearing, the chairman of the Finance Committee, the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, and the ranking member from Idaho, Senator CRAPO, both were recounting about the influx of fentanyl and synthetic opioids into their States and the impact it is having on crime and overdose deaths of the people they represent and care so much about.

But last year alone, 108,000 Americans died of drug overdoses, and 71,000 of those from synthetic opioids. Virtually all of the 108,000 deaths were caused by drugs that came across the southern border.

So it is not just economic migrants looking for a job and a better way of life. It is people with criminal records, sex offenders. It is people smuggling drugs into the United States. It is the criminal gangs who distribute those drugs in major cities all across the country, including in New Jersey, and who are responsible for much of the violence—particularly the gun violence—as they fight for market share and territory.

So every community in the country now is a border community and a border State.

This is not what successful immigration or border security policy looks like. The number of border crossings may have temporarily dipped, but communities across the country are still being crushed by the weight of President Biden's border crisis.

The one silver lining in all of this is that it appears the President is finally—finally—acknowledging the crisis at the border. With a possible reelection for President just around the corner, it looks like he is finally giving at least lip service to this major political liability.

In his State of the Union Address last week, President Biden urged Members of Congress:

If you won't pass my comprehensive immigration reform [bill], at least pass my plan to provide the equipment and officers to secure the border.

I was wondering what plan the President was referring to. None of us have seen it, to my knowledge. I have asked many of my Senate colleagues, and they don't know what the President is even talking about because none of them have seen his plan to secure the border.

He hasn't shown a serious interest in using the existing authorities to stop the flow of illegal immigration. But if the President's views have changed and now he is serious about dealing with this crisis, he will find a lot of allies here in Congress, and I would be one of them.

Senators on this side of the aisle want to reform the processes by which migrants are handled to quickly remove unlawful migrants who have invalid asylum claims and ensure that the cartels are not able to overwhelm the Border Patrol by directing migrants to key strategic locations while, then, the drug cartels move illegal drugs into the country that take the lives of innocent Americans.

The experts I listen to—the Border Patrol, mainly—have advocated for a combination of personnel, technology, and infrastructure to ensure that the Border Patrol is capable of stopping dangerous criminals and contraband at the border. And we need to fix the broken asylum system along with its characteristic catch-and-release because if there are no real consequences for people coming into the country, even though they don't qualify for asylum, they are going to continue to come. And that has been the case during the entirety of the Biden administration.

So if the President is serious now, at long last, I encourage him to pick up the phone. Communities across Texas and across the country are suffering because of the Biden administration's failure to simply do the job of the Federal Government.

Mayor Adams said while visiting El Paso last month:

Our cities are being undermined, and we don't deserve this. Migrants don't deserve this and the people who live in the cities don't deserve this.

I agree with Mayor Adams, and I hope President Biden has finally learned that lesson as well.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELIZABETH PERATROVICH DAY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor for a few moments this afternoon to recognize a woman of great distinction, a woman of valor, a woman by the name of Elizabeth Peratrovich, who championed civil rights for all Alaskans.

February 16, in Alaska, is a significant day. It is a day that the State of Alaska recognizes and observes Elizabeth Peratrovich Day. We have designated this day as early as 1988, but it is a time for us, as Alaskans, to reflect on the contributions of a pretty extraordinary Native woman, a Tlingit woman.

So I think it is important, and I have had an opportunity over the years to speak about Elizabeth Peratrovich. Senator SULLIVAN and I advanced a resolution recognizing Elizabeth Peratrovich's contributions when it comes to civil rights, and I think it is always important and timely to pay attention, to reflect on the legacies of those who have really worked to advance a more inclusive society and a more representative democracy.

Elizabeth Peratrovich carried the Tlingit name Kaaxgal.aat. I am attempting to do that well but certainly with respect to honor her name. She was of the Lukaax.adi clan. She was born on Independence Day. I think that is pretty fitting—born on Independence Day in Petersburg, AK, in 1911.

It was just right after that, right after the period that Elizabeth was born in Petersburg, that a group of Native people from across Southeast Alaska formed an organization called the Alaska Native Brotherhood, ANB. Two years later, the Alaska Native Sisterhood was formed, ANS. These are considered the oldest indigenous civil rights organizations in the world, coming out of Southeastern Alaska. ANB and ANS sought to advance equal opportunities for education, employment, housing; and they fought to secure Native civil rights.

So Elizabeth Peratrovich and her husband Roy became active in ANB and ANS in the forties. They moved to Juneau, our State's capital, in 1941. And their personal accounts of the discrimination that they encountered in Juneau, as Alaska Natives—you read the accounts, you read the stories, and it truly parallels the Jim Crow practices of the South.

But rather than be diminished, rather than be deterred, Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich were advocates, advocates against the adversity that they saw in their own communities. And it was

through their work with ANB and ANS that they began advocating for an anti-discrimination bill in the territorial legislature.

And they pointed out the simple fact that Alaska Natives were paying taxes for a public school system, the same public school system that excluded their very own children. They pointed out that Alaska Native men were fighting in World War II and then, when they returned from the war, those Alaska Native veterans were denied rights that others enjoyed.

These very real, very immediate confrontations with discrimination drove their pursuit of equal rights for people all across the State of Alaska. So they worked on this anti-discrimination bill that was advancing through the legislature. It took a period of time. It was reintroduced in 1945, and in 1945 the measure passed the Alaska State House and moved on to the State senate.

And the debate on the senate floor was apparently quite animated and vocal throughout, but there was a territorial senator who denounced the efforts to desegregate. And he argued, and the words he quoted are ones that, as Alaskans, we see. The story told a lot. He said:

Who are these people, barely out of savagery, who want to associate with us whites, with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind us?

That is what he said on the senate floor.

At the end of the floor debate, at that time, it was not unusual to open up for comments from those who might be part of the public. I served in the Alaska State Legislature, and we have galleries that sit directly behind the chambers that are open to the chambers. And Elizabeth Peratrovich was sitting in the gallery listening to this extended and very offensive debate, quite honestly. But she rose, and she said:

I would not have expected that I, who am barely out of savagery, would have to remind the gentlemen with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind them of our Bill of Rights.

She stood gracefully. She stood firmly. She refuted clearly. And when asked if she thought that the bill would eliminate discrimination—so, again, a pretty interesting exchange between members of the senate and a member of the public in the gallery—and not just a member of the public in the gallery but a Native woman speaking up and challenging, forcefully and calmly but with a determination and a resolve.

And when she was asked if she thought the bill would eliminate discrimination, she replied:

Do your laws against larceny and even murder prevent those crimes? No laws will eliminate crimes, but at least you as legislators can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination.

A pretty powerful reminder.

And there was a long period of silence after her remarks, and then a wave of applause went through the gallery and through the senate floor, including from some who had previously opposed the bill. Alaska's Governor at the time, Ernest Gruening, was the one to sign the anti-discrimination law, the Nation's first anti-discrimination law. He signed it into law on February 16, 1945. This was almost two decades before the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is pretty significant when you think about the contributions of this woman, Elizabeth Peratrovich, her husband Roy Peratrovich, and other Alaska Native leaders, at a time when discrimination was rampant throughout our country, that they had the courage and the strength and the determination to stand up for what is right.

She is an inspiration because she set the example that, when you see injustice, you speak out, you take action. And she also provided a great example for why we need to listen to the perspective of all voices, especially—especially—those who have been left out or were left behind.

Elizabeth Peratrovich is, as I mentioned, recognized in Alaska on this day. She has also been recognized nationally. In 2020, the U.S. Mint released these \$1 coins commemorating Elizabeth Peratrovich, and 2020 was the 75th anniversary of when the anti-discrimination law of 1945 became law in our State.

On the one side of the coin, it features the portrait of Elizabeth, the name of the legislation that she advocated for, and the symbol of the Tlingit Raven moiety, of which she was a member. So it is, indeed, a significant reminder to each of us, Alaskan and non-Alaskan.

I think Elizabeth Peratrovich Day is also a timely reminder for those of us who serve here in the Senate. It may not be easy to take on some of these complicated issues, especially when partisanship is pulling Members back to their corners, but we know we can make good progress. We have done it. We certainly did it with the Violence Against Women reauthorization. We need to follow a process that allows us to get something done as opposed to simply sending messages.

So as Alaska celebrates Elizabeth Peratrovich Day, I would hope the Senate would look to her legacy, her example as an inspiration, as we seek unity, as we follow her example of treating fellow citizens with respect.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about Black History Month, which has its roots with Carter G. Woodson as early as 1915 and has been officially recognized since 1976.

Black History Month is an opportunity for celebration and discovery. It is a time to share the successes and